

Henderson County Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting

January 11, 2022, 12:00pm, King St Meeting Room

In attendance: Jeff Donaldson, David Hill, Scott Rhodes, Bob Smith, Autumn Radcliff, Philip Ellis, Stephanie Cantwell, Katie Breckheimer, Hunter Marks, Ralph King and Tricia King.

Staff in attendance: Carleen Dixon, Jason Kilgore and Kathy Johnson.

1. Call to Order: 12:05pm

2. Approval of Minutes: A motion to approve the December 2021 minutes was made by Hunter Marks and was seconded by David Hill. The motion passed unanimously.

3. New Business:

a. Staffing Updates

Carleen Dixon shared that the Administrative Assistant I position is posted and open for applications. She added, all three part-time Administrative Assistant office positions have been filled. Carleen plans to add the following staff requests to the upcoming 2022 budget planning process: Park Technician I (combining two auxiliary positions), Park Technician II, one full time Administrative Assistant (combining two auxiliary positions), one Special Needs Programmer (to start partnering with Donnie Jones), and one full-time staff for Edneyville Elementary Gymnasium. Some of these positions we were hoping to see right before covid hit and they were put on hold. The Park Technician II has been requested for the last two years; this is an important need in Parks.

b. New Grant opportunities through NCLWF and Connect

Carleen stated the NC Land and Water Fund has released 75 million dollars in grants for North Carolina. HCPR is looking at applying for funding to be used for the Etowah Park Stream Restoration project. It is a very short turn around so we are not sure we can make the deadline. The Connect Grant is a one-time grant that would be applicable to use for the Jackson Park playground project. The funds are meant to enhance

parks access for veterans and children with disabilities. Carleen is waiting for the details to be released as it is tied up with the State Budget currently. When the details to apply are released I will update the board.

4. Unfinished Business:

a. Greenways Update

Autumn Radcliff provided an update on the Greenways Project to the Henderson County Board of Commissioners at their December meeting. The commissioners established the Rail-Trail Advisory Committee (RTAC), with Chuck McGrady as its Chair. The RTAC committee is comprised of county staff along with community partners and will be responsible for providing project recommendations to the Board of Commissioners. Vaughn and Melton were selected as the lead engineering firm for Phases 1-3 of the project (6.5 miles From Kanuga Rd. to Hwy 64 in Horseshoe). Radcliff reported the County is looking for additional funding sources and will be researching encroachment issues and MOUs with Laurel Park and Hendersonville. RTAC meetings will be held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month and are open to the public.

Carleen stated the grant submitted to improve the section of the Oklawaha Greenway in Jackson Park is still moving through the process. We hope to have a result by April 2022.

Phillip Ellis asked if the section near Penrose is complete with rail removal, in Transylvania County. He has seen debris and nails on the trail that still need to be cleared away. Autumn will follow up with the contractor for more details.

Katie Breckheimer asked if workdays were planned for the Friends of Ecusta Trail?

Carleen replied the next workday is planned for, this Saturday, January 15th, from 1-4pm.

b. Soccer Subcommittee Update

Phillip Ellis reported that the committee does not have an end point quiet yet, but the sub-committee has all agreed that we were probably right to not agree to an ABYSA proposal back then or at this stage. But we still aren't

sure exactly what to do and we need some more time. There are things falling into buckets to help make recommendations but not final yet. We met with a soccer coach, and we are going to meet with school soccer coaches. We are going to continue this process and bring a logical way forward. I will say it was mushy to me what the problem was, who cares if there is a private entity providing a recreational soccer program. However, the confusion is legitimate, the flyers going out to parents from both organizations are similar. Both organizations are using language such as “Henderson County” and “Recreational Soccer”, so you have to look closely to see the difference. This problem still exists and needs to be addressed just not sure how drastically yet.

Carleen thanked the sub-committee for the work on this.

Jackson Park Playground Fund Raising Update

Carleen shared a slide show with a variety of playground options for the group to see. She stated there is a lot of behind-the-scenes work continuing and to date we have received approximately \$37,000 in donations. We are working to establish a youth committee to provide input and ideas for the final design selection. The main goal continues to be ADA accessibility for children of all ages and abilities to enjoy the playground.

c. LWCF Grant Update

Carleen shared that the grant application is due soon and she is providing the additional information requested by the grant committee. Carleen stated we should know by mid-April if we will receive the funding.

d. Balloon Ban Update

Katie Breckheimer stated her main concern is releasing mass amounts of helium balloons into the community. She feels the balloons can be harmful to our rivers and streams as well as affect the wildlife habitats and is asking the Board to consider a ban on mass balloon releases. Carleen provided Katie with information on County ordinances after the December meeting. Jeff Donaldson suggested that we look at surrounding counties to review their ordinances. Katie will continue to research and report back to the committee with her formal request.

The group was in consensus that individual balloons should be allowed and that children should be allowed to enjoy them within our parks.

e. Capital Budget Recommendations

Carleen stated that all board members received a list of possible capital budget projects at our last meeting and Carleen sent via email after the meeting. She briefly discussed the items again and asked for any recommendations or questions from the board.

Phillip Ellis asked if new soccer facilities are included on the budget?

Carleen stated that soccer projects work is ongoing, and that Marcus Jones is involved with the larger scale facility discussions with the county commissioners and the possible turf warranty.

Phillip Ellis asked about the recent proposals for options to improve Jackson Park Soccer Fields; he asked David Hill his thoughts on the matter.

David Hill noted that grading is not the best option and would have to be done every few years and that commissioners are researching other options for the fields.

5. Staff Updates

a. Parks Update

Jason Kilgore provided the parks update stating this is a very busy time for his staff with repairs and maintenance work. There is ongoing work on ballfield dugouts repairs, BMX track improvements, adding new playground safety mulch, and facility painting. He stated that the new laser grading machine approved by the county commissioners allows his staff to work on the ballfields in house and has been a welcomed equipment addition. He added, the apron at the shelter at East Flat Rock Park that stays muddy will be concreted and that we are also replacing one of the old swings with a brand-new swing set to be installed soon, depending on weather.

Katie provided an update on the Christmas Tree mulching program stating this has been a long-term beneficial partnership with the community. There was less trees recycled this year due to the overall shortage of live trees available. Mulch is available to the community.

b. Recreation Update

Carleen stated the New Year's Eve event was a great success and it was nice to be able to have the family focused event back this year.

You + Me Dance (February 11 and February 12, 2022) This event will take place at the Athletics and Activity Center gymnasium. There will be three event times available for the community from which to choose.

Easter Egg Hunt (April 9, 2022) This event will take place at Jackson Park and will have multiple hunt options for children of all ages.

6. Member Comments

Scott Rhodes thanked the recreation staff for an outstanding job at the youth basketball games. Mr. Rhodes said staff members went above and beyond to take care of students and assist with games.

Stephanie Cantwell applauded HCPR staff for including area softball coaches in recent discussions regarding the proposed recreation girls' softball program. She feels the discussions have been well received.

7. Call to Adjourn: 1:04pm

The next Recreation Advisory Board meeting will be held on February 8, 2022, at the Athletics and Activity Center located at 708 S. Grove Street, Hendersonville, NC.